

Commission News

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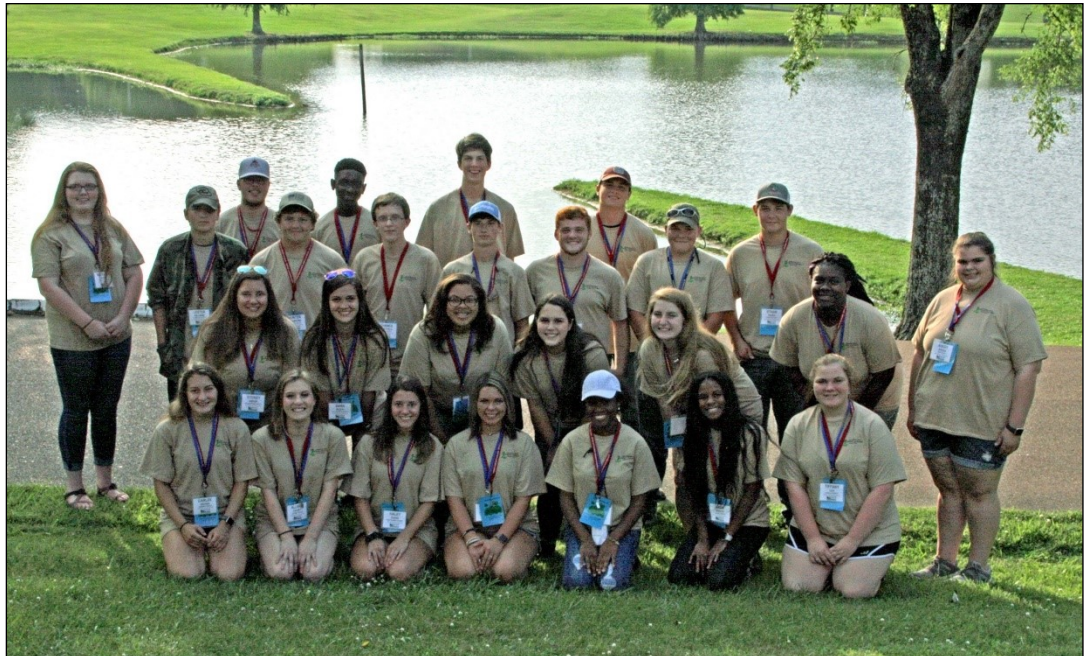
Students learn about conservation of natural resources at MSWC Youth Camp

RAYMOND, MS - Twenty-six high school students from Mississippi participated in the 2018 Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Youth Camp, held from June 3-7 at Hinds Community College in Raymond.

During camp, attendees visited the MS Museum of Natural Science and the MS Agriculture & Forestry Museum, learned about milking goats from Williams Goat Farm of Learned, MS, toured Hinds Veterinary Tech School, observed freeze-branding at Gaines Cattle Farm, watched a sawmill in operation at Copiah Lumber Company, and learned about genetics at Hinds CC Bull Test Station, polled Herefords at Penn's Farm, soils at Boyd Soils Farm and tree seedlings at Weyerhaeuser Nursery.

Jamie Holt of MDWFP did a presentation on black bears, and the campers learned about aquatic ecology from Deb Veeder of Adopt-A-Stream and Barry Pessoney of NRCS; forestry from Jim Barnes of NRCS, and reptiles from the Educational Outreach expert at the MS Museum of Natural Science.

Penn's Farm, Weyerhaeuser Nursery, Copiah County SWCD and Sonic Drive-In of Richland provided lunch during camp, and Mr. and Mrs. Herman Dungan of Jefferson Davis County hosted the campers at the Dungans' lakeside cabin, where the youths enjoyed swimming and tubing, followed by a dinner prepared by the Dungans



2018 YOUTH CAMP PARTICIPANTS (listed alphabetically by county): Adams-Endya Bynum, Jada Shelby; Benton-Grayson Dixon; Franklin-Andrew Wicker; Forrest-Hunter Crawford; Grenada-Lester Williams; Leake-Saadiqah Norris; Lincoln-Ethan Piazza, Tiffany Lea; Montgomery-Rana Davis, Haley Evans; Neshoba-Madelyn Byrd, Katelynn Bassett; Panola-Ben Rowsey, Dalton Hudson; Perry-Chance Hartfield; Pike-Avery Gipson, Brandon McKenzie; Quitman-Carlee Brown, Allison Tackett; Simpson-Clifton Polk, Brandon Walker; Tallahatchie-Sydney Snider, Sara Booth; Warren-Amoore Kelly, Samuel Terrett.

PHOTO BY KATHY DOUGAN, MSWCC

and Jefferson Davis County SWCD.

On Wednesday after traveling to various sites, the campers went to Bass Pro Shop in Pearl, then headed to Trustmark Park for dinner and a Mississippi Braves baseball game.

Camp concluded Thursday, with a presentation on Energy Conservation by Jason Pope of HCC in the morning, and an awards luncheon at noon, at which Becky Brown of Little Brown Light Ministries was the keynote speaker.

At the end of the luncheon, Simpson County Youth Camper Clifton "Kolby" Polk was awarded a \$3,000

Mississippi Association of Conservation Districts Endowment Fund Scholarship by MACD Board President and MSWCC Vice Chairman Pete Hunter, and MACD Board First Vice President Jerry Smith. All campers received Certificates of Participation.

Thank you to our sponsors: Mississippi Association of Conservation Districts, Inc., USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Copiah County Soil and Water Conservation District, Jefferson Davis County Soil and Water Conservation District and Sonic Drive-In of Richland.

Campers enjoy fun, food and fellowship with the Dungans

Mr. and Mrs. Herman Dungan of Jefferson Davis County hosted the campers at the Dungans' lakeside cabin, where the youths enjoyed swimming and tubing followed by a dinner prepared by the Dungans and Jefferson Davis County SWCD.



PHOTO BY CLAY BURNS, MSWCC



PHOTO BY CHELSEY GAZAWAY, MSWCC



Polk wins Youth Camp scholarship

Clifton "Kolby" Polk of Simpson Co. tests a water sample on June 5, 2018, during Youth Camp. Polk was the winner of the 2018 MACD Endowment Fund Youth Camp Scholarship.

PHOTO BY KATHY DOUGAN, MSWCC

Pasture Party/Cattle Seminar to be held July 12 at The Gin in Flora

Soil Health is the topic of a Pasture Party and Cattle Seminar on Thursday, July 12, 2018, at The Gin at Flora Station, 4819 MS-22.

Doors open at 5:30 PM, with the program starting at 6:30 PM.

Please call Madison County MSU Extension office for reservations, at 601-859-3842. Reservations are requested in order to plan for refreshments.

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PHOTO BY ROBIN TISDALE, MSWCC

More than 200 attend Lafayette Co. Field Day

OXFORD — Approximately 215 third-graders from Lafayette Elementary School attended the Lafayette County Field Day on May 4, 2018, at Lamar Park in Oxford.

The event, organized by the Army Corps of Engineers and the Lafayette County SWCD, included the following presenters:

Mississippi State University Extension Service, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Oxford Recycling, Water Safety, Tree Board, Natchez Trace Parkway, the Mississippi Museum of Natural Sciences, Tennessee Valley Authority, Mississippi Forestry Commission, Lafayette County Extension Services and Mississippi Soil & Water Conservation Commission.



MONA FOSHEE, a Natchez Trace Ranger with the National Park Service, (above) displays and discusses skulls and pelts.

ROBIN TISDALE, MSWCC FIELD REP (at right, yellow arrow) talks to third-grade students about the Soil Tunnel.



AT THE SOIL TUNNEL ENTRANCE, left to right: Lee Patterson, Lafayette Co. NRCS; Terri Smith, Panola Co. SWCD;; Jimmie Carol Watts, Lafayette Co. SWCD; Judy Youngblood, Lafayette Co. SWCD; and Terry Myers, Panola Co./Lafayette Co. NRCS.

Meat scientist speaks at Lady Landowners meeting

OXFORD, MS — About 40 attended the Lafayette County SWCD Lady Landowners meeting on May 15, 2018.

Lafayette County SWCD and MSU Extension Service sponsored the event, which was held at the Lafayette County North Central Fire Station in Oxford.

Dr. Thu Dinh, a meat scientist from MSU, spoke about various cuts of meat, explaining which cuts are the best.

The crowd was comprised of mostly ladies (and a few gentlemen).



Dr. Thu Dinh, a meat scientist, talks about cuts of meat at the Lady Landowners meeting. PHOTO BY ROBIN TISDALE, MSWCC FIELD REP

Adopt-A-Stream Workshop set for June 12-14

Flint Creek Water Park near Wiggins is where Mississippi Wildlife Federation and MDEQ will hold a two-day Adopt-A-Stream Workshop June 12-13, with an optional half-day workshop on June 14.

The two-day program provides an in-depth study of watersheds, as well as hands-on training in chemical and biological parameters important to a healthy stream.

In addition, the workshop will:

- Increase awareness of nonpoint source pollution;
- Introduce surveying and mapping of your watershed, and;
- Increase watershed protection awareness and possible actions to take to help watersheds

A new model of *It Begins at Home* offers ideas about projects such as:

- Storm drain marking
- Stream clean-up
- Recycling
- Advocacy, and more

The June 14 half-day program will focus on *Black Creek, a Wild and Scenic River*. A float trip is

planned to introduce participants to the stream's flora and fauna, and also for a watershed action clean-up project.

Adopt-A-Stream is a program that promotes environmental stewardship through training workshops, outdoor field activities and by introducing participants to watershed action projects.

Registration information is available on the Mississippi Wildlife Federation/Adopt-A-Stream website, or by contacting Debra Veeder, Adopt-A-Stream Coordinator, (601) 605-1790, or email dveeder@mswf.org to request a registration form.

Who Should Participate?

Educators, land managers, advocacy groups, Scout troop leaders, Envirothon Team advisors, watershed team leaders, environmental educators, concerned citizens and others.

For teachers, two CEU credits are available for the two days, and 2.4 CEU credits for the two-and-a-half days.

UPCOMING EVENTS

JUNE 12, 2018

Central Area Summer Meeting,
Holmes CC, Kosciusko, MS

JUNE 14, 2018

Delta Area Summer Meeting,
Grammy Museum, Cleveland, MS

JUNE 19, 2018

South Area Summer Meeting,
Business Plaza, Columbia, MS

JUNE 21, 2018

North Area Summer Meeting,
Extension Building, Pittsboro, MS

JUNE 26-28, 2018

MCDEA Summer Meeting,
Hampton Inn, Cleveland, MS

JULY 12, 2018

Pasture Party/Cattle Seminar,
The Gin, Flora, MS

MFC takes to skies to track forest health

JACKSON, Miss. - The Mississippi Forestry Commission, or MFC, takes flights twice a year to monitor forest health. The Forest Health flights look for issues, such as infestations of the southern pine beetle, which according to the U.S. Forest Service, is said to be the most destructive insect pest of pine forests in the South.

MFC provides an interactive map at <http://www.mfc.ms.gov/southern-pine-beetle-activity-map> that shows 169 suspected southern pine beetle spots identified



The brown to black southern pine beetle is about 1/8 inch long with a rounded hind end. Larvae are white with a reddish-brown head and the pupae are pure white. Eggs are white and easily visible to the eye. Photo credit 2516004 David T. Almquist, University of Florida, Bugwood.org

on privately owned forestland in Mississippi.

The southern pine beetle

Dendroctonus frontalis, the southern pine beetle, prefers to inhabit loblolly, shortleaf, Virginia, pond and pitch pine. Weakening of trees by flooding, windstorms and especially drought, commonly precedes outbreaks.

During epidemics, beetles will attack trees that appear healthy and vigorous. Initial attacks are in the mid-trunk, and then the length of the tree.

The first indication of attack is usually yellowing or browning of needles. The trunk will usually reveal white, yellow or sometimes red-brown pitch tubes, about as large as a wad of gum.

Under drought conditions, pitch



Yellow area row indicates area of southern pine beetle infestation. Photo credit UGA0355021: Ronald F. Billings, Texas Forest Service, Bugwood.org

tubes may be very small or absent, and only reddish-brown boring dust will be present.

Adult beetles bore through the bark and excavate long winding "S" shaped galleries.

Eggs are laid in niches along the galleries. Larvae feed in the cambium until grown, and then excavate cells near the bark surface in which to pupate. After pupation, adult beetles chew through the bark and emerge. The complete cycle of the attack takes from 25- 40 days, depending on temperature.

Private forest landowners with concerns about potential southern pine beetle activity on their property should contact their Mississippi Forestry Commission Area Forester to find the Area Forester for each county, please visit <http://www.mfc.ms.gov/offices>

Cost-share funds available for infested pine forestland in 33 Mississippi counties

In 2018, cost share funds will be made available for pine forestland



When under attack by southern pine beetles, the tree trunk will usually reveal white, yellow or sometimes red-brown pitch tubes. UGA2108041: Ronald F. Billings, Texas Forest Service, Bugwood.org

in the following 33 Mississippi counties: Adams, Alcorn, Amite, Benton, Calhoun, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Clay, Copiah, Franklin, Grenada, Itawamba, Jasper, Jefferson, Lafayette, Lee, Lincoln, Marshall, Monroe, Newton, Panola, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Scott, Smith, Tate, Tippah, Tishomingo, Union, Webster, Wilkerson, Winston and Yalobusha. For information on the MFC's Southern Pine Beetle Prevention Cost-Share Program, please visit <http://www.mfc.ms.gov/SPB-Prevention>

SOURCE: Mississippi Forestry Commission

CONSERVATION SUCCESS

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Mehrles grow pecans, practice soil health on family farm

BY KATHY DOUGAN, MSWCC

Robert Mehrle and his wife, Mary Elizabeth “Mimi” (Anderson) Mehrle, live on what was once her parents’ 1,250-acre farm. For 20 years, Mehrle farmed the land that Mimi’s father, Edward Henry “E.H.” Anderson bought in 1927; Anderson farmed the land until his death in 1992. The Mehrles continue to operate a 32-acre pecan grove on the farm, however, they now lease the fertile Delta cropland to a farmer.

In order to ensure that the land is suitable for farming, Mehrle implements irrigation practices and soil health. “Irrigation is the preeminent factor for land management,” he said. “Without proper irrigation, the water on the fields cannot be regulated. And without proper irrigation on the fields, a farmer won’t want to rent the land. As a landowner, it is pretty important to us if we want to pass land on to children to appreciate it like we do.” Irrigation increases the longevity of the farm. “All of our land now is irrigated except for one area, which will be done in next few years,” said Mehrle, who went back to college and earned his Ph.D. in Ag-Econ at Mississippi State in 1994.

He has divided the farm into blocks, and recently improved a 235-acre block of land. In addition to grading and irrigating, he planted trees, created a songbird sanctuary, and installed one riparian buffer. These improvements help reduce erosion, which Mehrle said is not much of an issue on the farm any-

more. “There are occasional problems with wind erosion, when it is really dry and the wind picks up in the summertime.”

Mehrle makes sure the cropland is soil tested every three years, and the farmer leasing the land applies appropriate lime and nutrients to maintain soil health. Zone sampling is implemented and nutrients are applied according to agricultural recommendations, utilizing precision ag techniques.

Yields have increased over the past few years on the cropland. Mehrle said the irrigation is a contributing factor, however, he said the yield increase could also be attributed to improved plant and seed varieties. The farmer leasing the land mostly plants soybeans, and rotates with corn and cotton, depending on the market price.

“We don’t dictate to them what they do, they (farmers leasing the land) have their own way. But I do wish we could entice them to plant cover crop, such as radishes and perennial ryes, to break up the soil.” Mehrle, however, acknowledges it is a “matter of their (the farmer’s) expenses.” Regarding soil health, “the only limitations are what our renters are willing to do,” he said.

“They (the farmer) does ridge till and hip up on the old beds from the



The Mehrles continue to operate a 32-acre pecan grove on the family farm, however, they now lease their fertile Delta cropland to a farmer.

previous year. If they have a bad fall with a lot of rain, they might end up tearing up some land by harvesting. This year they primarily are hipping everything up around he old beds,” Mehrle said. The Delta farmland is flat, with a very limited slope. Mehrle has installed and uses surge valves for irrigation on the fields, and flip-flops the water for better penetration. The farmer who leases Mehrle’s cropland makes decisions on the day-to-day operations of the land.

As for his own pecan crop, Mehrle said, “This year is a horrible crop (for pecans).”

Pond management workshop June 11 in Forrest County

The Forrest County Extension Office, 952 Sullivan Dr., Hattiesburg, is hosting a pond and lake management workshop at 4:45 PM on Monday, June 11, 2018.

The workshop will focus on:

- Site selection and construction
- Managing the water chemistry
- Fish population management

Call 601-545-6083 for more information.